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MURDER AND THE MICROSCOPE.

AMONGST the immense number of alterations and improvements which have of late years taken place in the mode of administering the criminal justice of the country, perhaps none are more remarkable than those which have reference to the examination of scientific witnesses, when called upon to substantiate the guilt or innocence of an accused person. A few years ago, it was the common opinion that the testimony of such witnesses ought to be regarded with a great deal of caution, if not of absolute distrust. We have ourselves heard people, who should have known better, say 'that circumstantial evidence was bad enough, but scientific evidence worse; and that, if upon a jury, they would certainly throw overboard the testimony of scientific witnesses as to the guilt or innocence of the prisoner.' Towards the formation of these opinions, scientific men themselves unintentionally contributed; a man of science, in the witness-box, being in times past very different from the same person in everyday life. If a witness for the prosecution, every tittle of evidence, valueless to the common-sense bystander, and every petty act of the prisoner, was in some way made a fresh link in the chain which drew the miserable wretch to the gallows; while, on the contrary, if it were upon the prisoner's behalf he gave his testimony, the most outrageous proofs of guilt were explained as being perfectly consistent with, and indeed confirmatory of the prisoner's innocence. Of course, in such evidence there was an immense deal of hair-splitting, and a considerable number of technical terms and learned phrases used, wholly unintelligible to the unprofessional man; the consequence of which eventually was, that the unprofessional man treated the evidence as he treated most other things he did not understand—that is to say, he looked upon it with contempt, and pronounced it nothing worth.

All this is very much altered in the present day. It is true that evidence is now and then given by unscrupulous men for certain purposes, so entirely opposed to our common sense, as to bring some amount of odium on science generally; but such cases are not of very frequent occurrence. The cause of this great change is owing to the dissemination, amongst all classes, of a knowledge of many of the data upon which scientific witnesses found their opinions. Questions as to the opinion of such witnesses were formerly the only ones put; whereas, such questions are now always accompanied by others as to the reasons for forming such opinion. If, in years gone by, a counsel had ventured to ask a medical man, while in the witness-box, upon what authority he formed his

conclusions, the witness would immediately have backed himself by an appeal to the doctrines propounded by Hippocrates, Galen, and a dozen other of his illustrious predecessors—the older the better. At the present day, such authorities have, to a great extent, been supplanted by others of quite a different description, most of whom have arisen during the last few years, and have in their revelations taught us important truths hitherto undreamed of. One of the most invaluable of these authorities is the Microscope.

Of course, the evidence which this instrument affords in all those cases where it is appealed to, is entirely circumstantial; but it is circumstantial evidence of the most important description. It may tell us that certain brown rust upon a knife or razor is blood—and more, that it is human blood; it may acquaint us with the nature of a piece of poisonous matter wholly invisible to the naked eye, and which would therefore, without its assistance, have entirely escaped detection; and so in numberless ways may the instrument fill up a hiatus in the evidence, which would otherwise have been wholly insufficient to convict or to exculpate a prisoner.

We will take, as our first illustration, the case of a man named Munroe, tried at the Cumberland spring assizes in 1855 for wilful murder. The fact of the murder having been committed by some one, and the manner in which it was accomplished, were both perfectly clear. The murdered man had been waylaid in a lonely spot; his throat had been divided from ear to ear, and his body thrown under a hedge. The murderer, whoever he was, had doubtless committed the horrible act for the sake of about thirty shillings, which the deceased, the paymaster of a colliery, had in his pocket at the time.

Circumstantial evidence of the most intricate character was produced against the prisoner. He had been seen in a field near the spot; he had changed a half-sovereign shortly afterwards, and had attempted to disguise himself—so it was suggested—by getting a blacksmith to cut off the whole of his whiskers. These and many other facts were deposited to, and occupied nearly two days in the recital; still, in them, taken individually or collectively, there was nothing to warrant a conviction. But now came the evidence of the microscope. A learned microscopist was called, to whom there had been previously submitted a pair of corduroy trousers and a razor, both known to have been in the possession of the prisoner at the time the murder, by whose hand soever committed, took place. On these trousers, after a most careful examination, the witness said he had discovered several small spots, the largest being not so large as a swan-shot; the

microscope revealed to him that these spots were human blood; and, from their peculiar shape and appearance, he stated confidently that they were formed by small streams of blood spirting upward from the divided artery of a living body. On examining around each of these spots, he discovered traces of soap, and evident signs of the spots having been attempted to be washed out, while over one or two of them ink had been carefully spread. On the blade of the razor there was some rust; on the ivory handle, a smear of blood, which also turned out to be human. Of course, a vast number of questions were asked in cross-examination, in order to test the credibility due to the assertion that these spots and stains were human blood; that assertion being grounded on the delicate measurement of those minute bodies called corpuscles or globules, which constitute the colouring matter of blood. As to this, however, the evidence of the witness was altogether unshaken—the corpuscles found in human blood are each of them about the size of an inch in diameter, and differ more or less in size from those of any known quadruped—those of the sheep being but $\frac{1}{1000}$ of an inch; of the dog, $\frac{1}{800}$; &c.

What could be said against such evidence as this? Here was a razor rusted with blood—blood, too, being on the handle; trousers with spots of human blood upon them, which it had been attempted to eradicate by washing and covering with ink. Coupled with the other evidence in the case, it was irresistible; a verdict of guilty was found, and the man was executed.

In the next case we will mention, the value of the microscope as an agent in the detection of crime was still more strikingly shewn, although, from certain causes, the prisoner escaped the punishment which no reasonable person could doubt he justly merited.

At the Chelmsford spring assizes, 1852, C—H— was put upon his trial for wilful murder. The circumstantial evidence, by which it was attempted to bring the guilt to the prisoner's door, was even more complicated than in the last case; but although, without the scientific evidence, it was sufficient to raise against him a grave suspicion, it would have been wholly ineffectual to convict him of so heinous a charge as murder. The victim in this case was an old woman, living alone, with a considerable amount of money in her bed-chamber. A neighbour calling upon her one morning at eleven o'clock, found the house shut up, and no appearance of anybody about. Being alarmed, she got through a window into the dwelling, and ascending into the sleeping-room, found the poor creature in her bed, quite dead, the back of her head having been beaten in—no doubt by means of a large hammer lying close by—and her head nearly severed from her body. An alarm was immediately given; an inquest was held, and the police were soon in active pursuit after the murderer.

It was not very long before suspicion fell upon H—. Footsteps had been noticed round the house, which coincided with the impress of the boots he wore; the hammer found near the murdered woman's bed was declared by a neighbour to have been seen in his possession; a little girl had observed him come from near the house on the morning in question; but more than all, in a brook about a mile from the dwelling where the murder was committed, was found a cotton handkerchief, and tightly rolled up in it a razor, covered with blood, which was identified as belonging to the prisoner.

This razor, together with the handkerchief, was conveyed immediately to a clever microscopist in London, who, after examination, returned them both with the intelligence, that the blood upon them was certainly human. The case then seemed complete against the prisoner, and at the next assizes he was placed upon his trial. One question, however, had yet to be disposed of. Assuming that the razor and hand-

kerchief belonged to the prisoner, and that the blood upon them was human, how was it to be shewn that they were connected with *this* murder, they having been found more than a mile from the house in which it was committed? The microscope at once gave a conclusive answer to this difficulty. Upon the blade of the razor, when carefully examined with a high power, there was found beside the blood a few fibres, which were distinctly sworn to as being a mixture of flax and cotton, the fibres of these two products being perfectly distinguishable the one from the other by means of the microscope—a fact well known to all who take any interest in the purity of *lint*. On examining the murdered body, it was discovered that the instrument with which the wound was made had partially severed one of the strings of the poor woman's night-cap, and that the material forming that string was composed of a mixture of cotton and flax! A more convincing proof of the prisoner's guilt could scarcely have been desired. There was, however, one remaining link—the identity of the handkerchief and razor. Only two people could supply this—the father and the sister of the prisoner. Before the magistrates, the old man had reluctantly admitted that both were his son's; but when he saw his son before him in the dock, looking upon him with entreating eyes, as the arbiter of life or death, the old man's courage gave way, and he declared that he could identify neither the one nor the other; so also said the sister; and thus, after all, the jury were reluctantly obliged to acquit the prisoner. To him, however, I may incidentally mention, this was of little avail. Scouted from village to village, H— vainly solicited either employment or charity; and two months after his acquittal, he was found lying dead under a hedge, from—as a coroner's jury subsequently declared—'starvation.'

In both these cases, then, the microscope gave the most important help towards establishing the guilt of the prisoners; and it is worthy of remark, that the peculiar value of the assistance afforded by the instrument lay, not so much in the discovery of blood in the one case, and of blood and certain fibres in the other, as in shewing conclusively the particular kind of blood and description of fibre. If, on the knife of Munroe, the microscope had said only that there was blood, the tale would have been worth but little, living as the prisoner did in a country village, where twenty different operations might have brought that fluid upon his knife and clothes; but when the fact was revealed that that blood was *human*, it of course afforded a very strong proof of the guilt of the accused. So with the vegetable fibres on the razor; as fibres simply they might have come even from off the handkerchief in which the razor was wrapped; but being partly cotton and partly flax, the case assumed a very different aspect.

The value of this peculiar *discriminating* power of the microscope was remarkably illustrated in a very curious case tried a few years ago at Norwich. A female child about nine years old was found one morning lying upon the ground, in a small plantation, quite dead; the cause of death being at once denoted by a large and deep gash in the throat, severing both of the chrotid arteries, the trachea and the oesophagus. Suspicion immediately fell upon the mother of the murdered girl, who had been seen by more than one person leading her daughter towards the plantation on the morning of the day upon which the crime was presumed to have been committed.

Upon being taken into custody, the woman behaved with the utmost coolness—at once admitted having taken her child to the plantation where the body was found; but averred, that having arrived there, the girl ran about gathering wild-flowers; that she subsequently lost sight of her, and after a long search, returned home without her. Upon being searched,

there was found in the woman's possession a large and sharp knife, which was at once subjected to a minute and careful examination. Nothing, however, was found upon it, with the exception of a few pieces of hair adhering to the handle, so exceedingly small as scarcely to be visible. The examination being conducted in the presence of the prisoner, and the officer remarking: 'Here is a bit of fur or hair on the handle of your knife,' the woman immediately replied: 'Yes; I daresay there is, and very likely some stains of blood, for, as I came home, I found a rabbit caught in a snare, and cut its throat with the knife.' The knife was sent to London, and with the particles of hair, subjected to a microscopic examination. No traces of blood could at first be detected upon the weapon, which appeared to have been washed; but upon separating the horn handle from its iron lining, it was found that between the two a fluid had penetrated, which turned out to be blood, *certainly* not the blood of a rabbit, but bearing every resemblance to that of the human body. Then came the examination of the hair, which added powerfully to the presumption of the prisoner's guilt. Without knowing anything of the facts of the case, the microscopist immediately declared the hair to be that of a *squirrel*—in this he could not be mistaken, for the fur of one animal differs so entirely from that of another, not only in its size, colour, &c., but in its actual construction, that it is altogether impossible to mistake it when under the microscope. Now, round the neck of the child, at the time of the murder, there was a tippet or 'victorine,' over which the knife, by whomever held, must have glided; and this victorine was made of *squirrel's fur*!

This strong circumstantial evidence of the guilt of the prisoner was deemed by the jury sufficient for a conviction, and whilst awaiting execution, the wretched woman fully confessed her crime.

After such proofs as these, which are but a sample of a hundred others that might, if necessary, be adduced of the value of scientific evidence in judicial investigation, we can hardly imagine any one to be bold enough to deny the utility or importance of such evidence; yet we are aware that the question must continually occur to many—'How did our forefathers manage to bring offenders to justice without the use of microscope, chemical analysis, or anything of the kind?' Why, the fact is, that crimes, in the times of our forefathers, were mostly committed in a very bungling manner, and very slight proofs of guilt were held to be sufficient to secure a conviction. Before the recent improvements in microscopic science, there was, for instance, no direct means of ascertaining whether a stain was caused by blood or by any other fluid. Chemistry, indeed, within the last twenty years, afforded a somewhat delicate and circuitous means of detection, but after all, a very unsatisfactory one—simply detecting the presence of a peculiar body called hematosine, the colouring matter of the blood, without the slightest intimation as to whether it was the blood of man or of any inferior animal.

Then came the revelations of the microscope, continually more and more delicate. First it was shewn, as we have before said, that the blood of every description of animal is composed of a countless number of minute globules, mostly of a red colour, floating in a colourless fluid. Subsequently, it was discovered that these globules, in the class mammalia, are uniformly of a circular form, not spherical, but disks, the thickness of which equalled about one-fourth of the diameter; while in birds, fishes, and reptiles, they are of an oval form; and last of all, the remarkable discovery was made, that every kind of animal has in its blood globules differing in size from those of any other kind.

Nothing, indeed, was so much wanted in medical jurisprudence as a safe and certain detection of blood-

stains; for several other substances so exactly simulated them, as to be mistaken even by eminent professional men. Orange or lemon juice left upon a knife, or other piece of iron, will in a few days produce a stain so nearly resembling that caused by blood, as to deceive the most careful observer; and not many years ago, in Paris, a man was very nearly convicted of murder, owing to a knife being found in his possession, stained with what was pronounced by several witnesses to be blood, but afterwards discovered to be simply *lime-juice*.

So, again, with the stains of paint formed from the red oxide of iron. About fifteen years ago, a person was found murdered in Islington. Suspicion falling upon a particular individual, he was arrested, and in his possession was found a sack having upon it many stains declared to be dried coagulated blood. These stains were carefully and chemically examined by Professor Graham, who proved them to be red paint containing 'peroxide of iron;' and the sack was ultimately found to have been worn as an apron by a young man apprenticed to a paper-stainer. The accused was immediately discharged.

Now, in both these cases, the microscope would instantly have declared the stains not to be due to the presence of blood. But our ancestors, without the aid of chemical or microscopical investigation, would most certainly have considered them to be strong and incontrovertible evidences of the guilt of the accused; and who shall say how many have unjustly suffered at a time when ill-grounded suspicion and assertion could not be negated by an appeal to the evidence which the various improvements in science will now permit us to invoke.

It ought, however, to be borne in mind, that the microscope, and similar scientific instruments, do not in any way enable us to dispense with the testimony of learned men in criminal cases, but rather serve to render such evidence more valuable; for although it is very true that the revelations made by so simple an instrument as a piece of tube some nine or ten inches long, with a few glasses at either end, are sufficient in many cases to send a man to the gallows; yet the tale such an instrument tells, can be understood only by those who, by long observation and experience, have learned the 'language' in which it is told.

Honour, then, be ascribed to the men whose skill and patience have placed such an instrument at our disposal; greater honour to those who, by long years of laborious investigation, are able to understand the revelations daily brought before them; but the greatest honour of all to those—happily for us, there are many such in the present generation—who, abandoning the, to many people, unintelligible jargon of technical words and learned phrases, in which everything relating to science was formerly clothed, are content to interpret, in plain and unmistakable language, the as plain and unmistakable tale which the microscope and other means of scientific investigation enable them to disclose.

THE RAPHAEL OF GENOA.

ONE brilliant afternoon in the spring of the year 1544, some Florentine nobles of distinction were sauntering through the streets of Genoa, surveying, with the curiosity of strangers and the interest of connoisseurs, the architectural improvements and pictorial decorations which on every side seemed in progress.

The republic had just attained the most glorious period of her annals. Reposing after the wars which had desolated Italy, free from all internal dissensions, and delivered by Andrea Doria from the yoke of the French, her sway was now acknowledged throughout the whole of the Ligurian coasts; while the fame of the noble admiral, unanimously hailed as the prince,

the father of his country, shed imperishable lustre over the city, where, greater than a king, he yet refused to accept of the sovereign dignity.

'Per Diana!' exclaimed Gino Tornabuoni, the eldest of the party, who had formed his taste under Lorenzo the Magnificent—'per Diana! Genoa should be much beholden to the prince. The city is changed beyond recognition since I was here, scarcely twenty years ago.'

'Say rather to our countryman, Pierino del Vaga, one of Raphael's most favoured pupils,' rejoined another of the party; 'for, if I have heard aright, it was his repairing hither after the sack of Rome by the constable of Bourbon, that first taught the wealthy Genoese to unlock their coffers for the embellishment of their city, and the honour of their name.'

'Your pardon, Messer Bardi,' said the senator Spinola, who was accompanying the travellers in their survey; 'but bethink you, though I gainsay not the merit of Pierino, much praise is nevertheless the admiral's due. He took the young stranger by the hand, and gave up his own palace for the first essay of his skill.'

'Where the matchless frescoes we have just been viewing led to a new era in Genoese art,' retorted Bardi, a perfect specimen of a conceited young Florentine, who sturdily maintained his national supremacy.

'Even so, messere. Thus encouraged, Pierino prospered rapidly, and founded a school which already numbers many worthy disciples.'

'You are right, senator,' said Tornabuoni in a conciliatory tone: 'unless the prince himself had led the way, even the divine Raphael could have worked no change in the hard dry manner—if I may venture so to call it—of your former schools; and no one under his station could have set the example of such magnificence as I see all are now trying to follow. Verily, the more I look around me, and note these goodly palaces, o'erlaid with tints that seem stolen from your golden sunlight and cerulean sea, the more I marvel and admire.' As he spoke, he paused before a large building in process of erection by a near relative of the all-powerful admiral, and scrutinised the paintings on the exterior. 'The taste,' he continued, 'is not, I own, of that strict purity we of Florence would admit, yet it gladdens me to view such tokens of new-born love of art and liberality. In these streets, where painters and sculptors walk with firm tread and erect bearing; where we behold now a statue newly placed in its niche, now a scaffolding half screening some frescoed palace front, I seem restored to the days of my youth, and recall the glories I witnessed in Florence under our great Lorenzo.'

'Yes,' said Spinola, complacently adjusting his black robe, to which sombre hue the senators of the republic were restricted, 'it is a conceit of ours, no doubt; but we deem that these glowing paintings, those rich mouldings and fair sculptures you see so common on the outside of our palaces, are in keeping with the brilliancy for which our Genoese sky is so renowned. Where nature has been thus prodigal, we would not have art chary of her stores.'

'The limner is doubtless of Pierino's teaching?' asked Bardi, as the group continued their observations on the frescoes, which depicted the principal feats of arms of the Doria family, and drew forth general expressions of approval.

'Ay, surely; Lorenzo Calvi was one of his earliest pupils. But that you may not think we lavish all upon our outer walls, will it please you to view the

paintings of the interior, which another of Pierino's followers has undertaken?'

So saying, the senator led the way up a wide staircase, into a large saloon on the *piano nobile*, on the ceiling of which, in a space twenty feet wide by thirty-six long, was a large painting, yet unfinished, representing the massacre of Niobe's children. The gigantic proportions of this fresco, the boldness and originality of its conception, at once riveted the stranger's gaze, and called forth a chorus of admiration, in which even Bardi freely joined.

'How admirably have the difficulties of that flattened arch been overcome!—how deftly are the masses disposed!' said the third Florentine, who had not yet spoken. 'What variety in the posture and expression of the figures! Look at that prostrate form; he is expiring without a struggle; the features are not convulsed, the pale lips wear a smile. The arrow stopped life's current in an instant! And that boy, quivering in every muscle, yet forgetting his own anguish in the endeavour to stanch his brother's wound!'

'Beautiful!—sublime!' cried the enraptured Tornabuoni. 'What purity of outline! what delicacy in every detail of the colossal anatomy! See, Bardi, far or near, the effect is equally good.'

'Yes, indeed,' assented the critic; 'save for slight evidences of a less experienced hand, I could almost believe Michael Angelo had furnished the cartoons. Pity the colouring is too dark; 'tis really the only blemish.'

While these nobles were thus discoursing, a slight delicate boy, meanly clad, and of a timid aspect, glided into the saloon. Without venturing a glance around him, he hastily mounted the ladder that led to the scaffolding, and seizing a brush, began working on the unfinished figure of Apollo. Horrified at the child's presumption in venturing to meddle with the principal person in the composition, the three Florentines raised loud cries of indignation.

'Off, off, thou unmannerly varlet!' shouted Tornabuoni. 'How darest thou lay a finger upon the master's painting? Down with thee at once, or thy back shall smart for it!'

'Let go, I say!' cried Bardi, springing upon the ladder with the intention of forcibly dragging down the offender, who spared him this trouble, however, by dropping his brushes with a terrified air, and commencing his descent; while the Florentine, still glowing with indignation, turned towards the senator, whose laughter he considered strangely out of place: 'Is it because ye are new to these things in Genoa, that works of such merit are so carelessly watched as to be free to any varlet from the streets to come and daub them at his pleasure? Ha! here thou com'st, young malapert! Thou art lucky the painter is not here, else thou wouldst not have escaped so easily.'

The poor boy, thus rudely apostrophised, slunk to the side of Spinola, looking up imploringly in his face, but too much overawed to speak. The senator, totally unmindful of his dignity, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, then patting the lad encouragingly on the shoulder, said: 'Hold up thy head, and be a man, Luchino! They'll not eat thee, thou foolish child! Noble gentlemen all,' he added with mock gravity, taking him by the hand, and forcibly leading him forward, 'permit me to make known to you Master Luca Cambiaso, aged seventeen, though somewhat frail and stunted for his years, the author of this same painting.'

'Come, come, senator,' said Tornabuoni, 'you have shewn us marvels enough to-day, without playing off a jest upon us now! What! a stripling like this, whom I should hardly have guessed to be twelve years old, to conceive and execute aught so perfect? No, no; you have overshot the mark!'

* This palace is still extant; it now belongs to the Spinola family, and contains the office of the British consulate; so that many English travellers, going thither for their passports, little recking of its ancient fame, pass before these frescoes, which, after three centuries' exposure to the elements, retain sufficient traces of the original colouring and design to justify their former celebrity.

'You hear him, Luchino?' said his patron. 'Climb up again, thou trembling imp, and shew what the boy-painter of Genoa can achieve.'

With great reluctance, so extreme was his natural timidity, Luca Cambiaso obeyed the injunction, and again took his place upon the platform. But once there, forgetting everything save the absorbing interest of his subject, he displayed such astonishing rapidity of execution and vigour of colouring, as captivated the spectators, who at last broke the silence with which they had been watching his proceedings by applause as vehement as their previous abuse.

Encouraged by their praises, a flush of triumph lit up the young artist's sallow cheek, his eye kindled, and holding a brush in each hand, using either right or left with equal facility, he painted with increasing enthusiasm; even the vicinity of the admiring Tornabuoni, who had silently mounted the ladder, and stationed himself behind him on the scaffolding, did not distract his attention, as he pursued his labours with a bold and vigorous touch that contrasted singularly with his shrinking demeanour.

'My son,' said the good old Florentine, 'I shall carry back with me to Florence a grateful recollection of this day; and esteem myself much indebted to thy noble countryman for having brought me hither to witness, with my own eyes, the first efforts of a hand which princes will one day grasp in fellowship and respect. Yet, ere I depart, I would fain see the cartoons thou hadst prepared to guide thee in this work. Young as thou art, long and careful studies of each figure in this composition were doubtless required of thee, ere so great an undertaking was committed to thy care.'

Blushing and confused, Luca hesitated a while, then pointing to a rough sheet of paper, scarcely more than a foot square, on which the subject of his colossal performance was delineated, said: 'Noble signor, that is the whole preparatory study I have made.'

'Then thou art even a greater prodigy than I deemed,' he exclaimed, embracing the boy in a transport of delight. 'Verily, Luchino, the saints have been very bountiful to thee: they sent thee Pierino del Vaga, fresh from the inspirations of Raphael and the Vatican, for thy master, and gave thee grace to profit by his teaching! Go on, and prosper, child; and when Italy shall hail thee as the worthy successor of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Titian, forget not thy friend Gino Tornabuoni, nor his early prediction of thy fame.'

Nearly forty years after the scene we have recorded, about noon, on a mild winter day, two men wearing the rich though grave costume of the Spanish court, the one past middle life, his companion hardly yet in its prime, were traversing with hasty steps the Patio de los Reyes, connecting the church of the Escorial with the remainder of the vast pile, half monastery, half palace, which, in pursuance of a vow, Philip II. had erected in honour of St Lawrence. Without pausing to admire the lofty Doric portico, they hurriedly entered the interior of the sacred edifice, on the decoration of which the king was still lavishing the wealth of the new hemisphere, and concentrating the talents of the old; and there, still heedless of the magnificence around them—the triple rows of richly hewn columns, the treasures gleaming from the side-chapels, the high-altar with its golden statues and jewelled pillars—their eager gaze was directed to the vaulted roof, where a number of workmen were busied in removing a scaffolding from one of the centre compartments.

The elder of the two, with a keen deep-sunk eye, and strongly marked features—of which, however, the fire and the severity were tempered by an expression of profound sadness on the brow, and a diffidence of

bearing that displayed itself at every gesture—after a hasty nervous glance upwards, drew a deep sigh of relief, and exclaimed: 'Our Lady be praised! They will yet be in time.'

'And more than in time, dear master,' was the response. 'When we left them to don our courtly gear, I certified first that little remained to do. Every beam and plank will be out of sight ere his majesty can be here.'

'And now, my Lazzaro,' said the painter confidently, as he leaned on the arm of his pupil, and drew him to a spot whence the painting, from beneath which the last vestiges of scaffolding were fast disappearing, could be most favourably viewed—'tell me frankly, as brother to brother, what think'st thou of it; how doth it strike thee as a whole?'

'As I have always thought of it: worthy of your best days, when your heart was light, and your brow smooth; nay, surpassing them, shewing what in happier times you would always have been. The old freedom of touch, the grace of fancy is here: your mind hath been itself.'

'I would it were thus, my son and trusty friend; I would fain be well assured that thy love to thy poor master doth not deceive thee. Truly Hope hath been whispering to me the while—fanning me with her soft wings when weary, lending me her brightest tints when my darkened soul would have reflected itself upon my subject. Paradise! Good sooth,' he continued gloomily, 'twas a strange conceit of the king's to assign that to me. Purgatory or hell would have suited my humour better.'

'Nay, dear master, but that this is a moment's cloud, I would avail myself of the licence your love hath given me, and chide you for thus doubting and despairing.'

'Ay, doubt, despair—for how many years have not I been their prey! How hath my life been worn away, how have my best faculties been wasted by wrestling against that, which my heart and my conscience condemn not—which the church hath permitted to others before now, yet denies to me!'

The young man was too much accustomed to these outpourings of bitterness to appear to notice them, otherwise than by some remark upon the approaching visit of the king and queen to inspect the fresco completed, which they had constantly watched in progress, and whose subject had been of Philip's own selection—that, he fancied, would lead the unhappy painter's thoughts into another and brighter channel.

'Thou art right, my Lazzaro. Yes, to-day may furnish the occasion for which I have so often prayed; and yet the thought of all that hangs upon the next hour, is well-nigh overwhelming. What if the king should so express his satisfaction with this work, as to embolden me to crave his all-powerful influence with the pontiff?—and then, overcome by my natural timidity, my tongue refuse to frame the petition, my knees to second its humility; and, in my miserable confusion and weakness, the favourable moment will be lost, and I shall be undone!'

It was Luca Cambiaso, the former bashful stripling of Genoa, who thus spoke, pacing the long aisles of the church his pencil had been selected to embellish, and whose presence at his court the proudest prince in Christendom had deigned to solicit as a favour.

Classed amongst the first painters of the age, respected and honoured by his fellow-citizens, the adored chief of a school of which the reputation bade fair to compete with the most celebrated of Italy, it is from the details of his domestic history that we learn how an ill-starred attachment, for which he could not obtain the sanction of the church, imbibed the best years of his existence, and caused him, absorbed in the sufferings of the man, to forget the triumphs and the claims of his calling as an artist.

The biographers of Cambiaso, with more minuteness than is often found in Italian memoirs, relate that the early death of his wife, a virtuous and amiable woman, and thrifty housekeeper, leaving him with a large family of young children, for a time reduced him to despair. Accustomed to her skilful discharge of all household and family duties, his sensitive organisation was unequal to cope with the cares that had so unexpectedly devolved upon him; and throwing aside his pencil in utter discouragement, for some months all the efforts of his friends to rouse him proved ineffectual. At this juncture, it was proposed that a young sister of his wife's should come to take the management of the house and of the unruly children, who had defied all the poor painter's attempts at management; and ere long the results of the admirable Bianca's good sense, activity, and mild though firm sway, became apparent, and the disorganised establishment resumed its former orderly appearance. In addition to these characteristics, wherein she resembled her sister, Bianca was endowed with an innate love of art, a harmony of taste, a refinement of perception, that Cambiaso had never previously met with in any female companion, and on which, with the natural dependence of his nature, he soon learned to place implicit reliance. From this state of feeling it was an easy transition to the avowal of his affection, and his determination to proceed at once to Rome, to solicit from the pope, Gregory XIII., the necessary dispensation to authorise their union.

Though he sought to propitiate the pontiff by the present of two large paintings, which—composed under the stimulus of all he hoped to obtain from his favour—were said to be among the happiest efforts of his genius, his petition was unsuccessful. The pope was inflexible to his prayers, and sternly exacted from him the promise that, as soon as he returned to Genoa, he would send his sister-in-law away from his house, and avoid her society. Drooping and heart-broken, the unhappy man, over whom this passion seemed to obtain greater empire in proportion to the hopelessness in which it was involved, religiously kept his word, and banished from his home the gentle woman, whose face, repeated in every sacred subject he composed for several succeeding years, attests how unfailingly she was present to his thoughts. But all inspiration, all life had forsaken him; and the greater part of his compositions at this period are so inferior to his earlier performances, that it is unfair to take them as specimens of his skill.

This state of miserable depression had lasted well-nigh five years, when an envoy from Philip II. arrived at Genoa, bearing his invitation to Cambiaso. The flattering distinction thus conveyed, and the large recompenses held out, would, however, have been ineffectual to induce the painter to comply, had he not fancied that, by interesting the king of Spain in his behalf, he might be prevailed upon to ask from the pontiff the grace denied to him; and filled with this idea, he suddenly passed from the depths of despondency to sanguine expectations of success, that gave back to his hand its former vigour, and to his eye its fire.

Accompanied by one of his favourite pupils, Lazzaro Tavarone, whose gratitude and devotedness had been unceasingly displayed during his master's unhappy state, Cambiaso arrived at Madrid. Here he was received with unwonted affability and interest by the king, who, in aught connected with the adornment of his magnificent toy, the Escorial, somewhat unbent from the usual severity of his demeanour, and at once introduced to the scene of his destined labours.

In the execution of the grand fresco first assigned to him, a representation of Paradise, the artist put forth all the energy of earlier days, and painted with a rapidity and intensity that his frame, worn by

continual anxiety and disappointment, was ill calculated to support, and in the irrepressible agitation with which he now waited the coming of the king, his alternate expressions of gloomy foreboding or buoyant hope, his varying colour and gleaming eyes, Lazzaro, too well acquainted with every fluctuation in his unhappy master, saw how much suffering was at work.

Uncertain what topic to introduce, yet unwilling to leave him undisturbed in the painful reverie into which he seemed to have fallen, as, muttering at intervals to himself, he continued to walk slowly backwards and forwards, the faithful scholar leaned against a column, and watched him with mournful solicitude; marvelling for the thousandth time at the undying fervour of this attachment in a man whose grizzled beard and furrowed brow betrayed the footprints of advancing years, no less than the ravages of sorrow.

'Lazzaro,' said Luca Cambiaso, suddenly pausing and confronting him, 'should I die in Spain, I doubt not the king will retain thee in his service, and my cartoons, and the studies we have made together, will render thee good aid. Yet I would fain have thee return to Genoa one day, and tell her'—

'Now, out upon you, honoured master,' cried the young man cheerily, 'for such talk as this! Die, forsooth! It is permitted to the unknown and unsuccessful to creep into a corner, hang their heads like a sick bird, and die to boot, if it so please them. But you? your life belongs to Italy and to fame. Remember the story you used to tell me when I idled at my easel, of the strangers who saw the painting of Niobe and her children, and what they predicted to you. Till that saying hath had its full accomplishment, talk no more of dying.'

'Well-a-day, those words might have been verified ere this,' returned Luca sadly; 'for 'tis no vanity to own I have had good gifts, if I confess likewise that for too many precious years they have lain unheeded and unprized. If I return to Genoa, I will seek out and destroy whatever I painted during that dark time. But hush! here comes the king. May my good angel be my help! I vow to our Lady of the Grazie a silver candlestick, and to the cathedral of St Lawrence at Genoa an altar-piece, if they will befriend me now!' And advancing with even more than his usual hesitation, the painter slowly drew near the royal party, which had entered by a private door, while Lazzaro modestly retired to some distance.

In compassion to the extreme timidity of Cambiaso, the king, who in Spain laid aside much of the icy formality which marked his demeanour when abroad, generally came unattended to inspect his progress. Even on this occasion, when he brought the young queen, Anne of Austria, his fourth wife, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and two or three others of his favourite nobles, to have the first sight of the recently finished painting, there was little of the state to be discerned which in those times seemed almost inseparable from royalty, and more especially might be regarded as the attribute of the haughty prince, whose dominions, besides Spain and her vast territories in America, comprised Naples, Portugal, and the Low Countries.

Advancing in the direction from whence he knew, by constant practice, the best view of the fresco could be obtained, the king, in the dress of black velvet familiar to us in the historical paintings of that period, encouragingly beckoned to the painter.

'We are come, as thou seest, good Luca, to enjoy in its perfection the goodly forestate thou hast furnished us of the condition of the beatified hereafter. Now, draw hither, and take heed if I expound rightly to the queen and these gentlemen all the celestial personages here depicted.'

'Your gracious majesty,' faltered Luca, in his imperfect Castilian, 'requires no help from me. By

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the aid of your benign counsels, and enlightened by your sacred lore, have I carried on this work. This poor hand did but execute what your royal judgment had conceived.'

'Tush, Luca! Nature made thee something better than a courtier, though I do not gainsay that I took a slight share in this assemblage of the blessed, which will ever bring thy marvellous speed in painting to my mind. See there, Anne,' continued Philip, turning to the queen, who was surveying, with a pleased girlish air, the bright colouring and richness of the general effect—'see that figure of thy holy patroness, the mother of our Blessed Lady. What say you to it?'

'Sire, it seems to realise my dreams of the venerable saint.'

'Well, mounting one day upon the scaffolding as was my wont, I found Luca had just completed it. I liked the whole, yet observed I wished the face had borne greater marks of age; then, turning away, soon forgot those passing words of blame, so much did I find on every side to praise. A moment afterwards, I chanced to turn round, and what saw I, think you? Why, the blessed saint full ten years older, as you view her now! Like the touch of an enchanter's wand had my Luca wrought this change.'

And the nobles chorused the praise which their monarch so lavishly bestowed; then stood in the attitude of profound attention, while he descanted on the different groups of patriarchs, prophets, and saints the picture comprehended in its vast expanse, bidding them at the same time remark how well the severe simplicity of the black and white marble pavement he had selected for the church, enhanced the glowing splendour of the roof.

'Well done, well done!' he exclaimed exultingly, turning towards Luca, who meantime had shrunk into the background. 'I cease not to applaud myself for having summoned thee hither. I am right well content'—and motioning to him to approach, leaned familiarly on his shoulder, and holding his hand in his, returned to the contemplation of the painting.

'What purity of expression,' said the royal critic, 'what holiness of joy, what beatific ecstasy doth shine on these blessed visages! I had been told thy greater power lay in depicting dark troubled scenes, or mournful faces; but here, thou seem'st to have had a vision of celestial happiness to inspire thy fancy.'

'O my gracious liege,' murmured the trembling painter, 'truly it was the thought of what your royal mercy could obtain for me, that cast light upon my soul.'

An ominous cloud passed over the king's brow, and he withdrew his hand; but Luca, in his eagerness, heeded it not, nor was conscious of a warning pressure upon his arm.

'One word from your lips, most mighty sovereign—but one word; and he who hath power to bind and loose will grant the dream, the hope of years! O noble prince, the church's prop, the church's pride, spurn not my prayer.'

In his frenzied pleading, he had laid hold of the king's mantle, but Philip plucked it from his grasp, and with a stern frown, turned away. In another moment, Luca's outstretched arm was forcibly drawn back, and he found himself face to face with the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

'Art thou mad, Luca?' he whispered, dragging him to the recess of one of the side-chapels. 'How couldst thou presume to venture on such a topic with the king? Thy unhappy passion was well known to him, but he little dreamed thou wouldst ever profane his ears with urging a request that the pope himself saw not fit to grant. What fiend possessed thee that thou must needs thrust thy paltry love-foresight on the majesty of Spain? Let him look to his gray hairs, and learn wisdom,' thus doth he bid me tell thee; and beware

thou breathe no word of this again, else thou wilt assuredly forfeit the royal favour, and be instantly ordered to depart.'

Like a person stunned, the unfortunate man reeled backward, and caught for support against the wall, while the duke, abruptly quitting him, rejoined the king, who was much chafed by this occurrence, and with the queen and his attendants, immediately left the church.

As Luca gradually returned to consciousness, and became sensible of their departure, a well-known voice pronounced his name, and he felt himself clasped in the arms of his faithful scholar.

'O Lazzaro,' he gasped faintly, 'take me hence. "Put not your trust in princes," I had often heard it said; yet when he held my hand in his, and I recalled the words of the Florentine, I deemed the time was come, and dared my fate. It is over now. Pray that the King before whom I next shall kneel will not cast me thus away!' And they bore Luca Cambiaso to his dwelling, where in a few days he died.

THE LATEST PROMISE OF THE IRON AGE.

It would require some little measure of consideration to determine what characteristic would best express the spirit of the present age. When the attention is fixed upon the doings in Australia and California, *golden* seems to be not altogether an inappropriate epithet. A few days since, we chanced to be present in a large meeting, in which a *ci-devant* lecturer, who assumed the *nom de guerre* of Parallax—*Paradox*, no doubt, he meant—challenged the collective forces of science to a tourney, undertaking to prove against them all, that our good old jolly round world is *flat*: whereupon, for a little time, we were constrained to feel that the age was a very *brazen* one. Glancing from the brazen oracle to its hearers, the suspicion presently arose, that *wooden* might prove more apt than either brazen or golden. On the *fast* banks of the Cam, again, the idea always presents itself that *mercurial* is the proper designation. But then, in moments of quiet reflection, that huge tubular bridge, which carries railway-trains from Caernarvon to Anglesey, across an intervening arm of the sea, comes back to the mind; and that mighty leviathan, too, which is building at Millwall, and which promises, after a short interval of preparation, to rush round the world every three months, with a burden of 25,000 tons in its ferruginous shell. Yes, there is in the composition of this wondrous age an ingredient of higher importance than either wood or mercury, gold or brass, and which does very much more to confer upon it a predominant feature. The age is really an *iron* one. Iron, in the hands of science, is doing more for the benefit of humanity, and for the advance of civilisation, than any other material agent that has been engaged in beneficent service since the civilised history of mankind began.

The peculiarity which is chiefly operative in rendering iron of high value in the constructive arts, is the extraordinary tenacity with which the little molecules of the metal hold together. They grasp each other so tightly, that it requires a very powerful wrench to tear them asunder. An iron bar, of the same size as an oak beam, that would be crushed by a weight of 400 pounds, will bear 2000 pounds, and come out of the trial unscathed. A square piece of sound-wrought iron, one inch thick and one inch long, is capable of sustaining a weight of eleven tons concentrated upon its middle.

But there are other properties accompanying this fivefold oak-power of iron, which are of scarcely inferior importance in a practical point of view. By

the instrumentality of the steam-roller and steam-hammer, and by the power of heat, the metal can be fashioned into any shape that is required; and by the processes of welding and riveting, masses can be provided of any size. It seems literally that art is now able to oppose to the rude forces of nature iron structures capable of resisting any amount of destructive violence they can bring into play. The hollow beam which lies across the Menai Strait allows railway-trains, laden with hundreds of tons, to be shot through it almost without causing it to bend from the straight line. The *Great Britain* steam-ship remained stranded for months on the rocky coast of Ireland, amidst the fury of the Atlantic breakers, almost without a strain. The *Great Eastern* steam-ship, when completed, if taken up by its extreme ends, an eighth of a mile asunder, with 25,000 tons hanging from its middle, would sustain the weight as if it were no more than twenty-five ounces. The utmost violence of winds and waves will no doubt be trifles when compared with its powers of endurance. Even the hurricane bursting broadside upon the marine giant, will scarcely disturb its equanimity as it floats upon the ocean. Such are the strength and the adaptability of iron!

Then, too, iron is dug from the ground. It lies ready for use upon the earth in inexhaustible masses, which require only to be taken from their natural repositories, and to be prepared for the uses to which mechanics desire to apply them. There, however, is the rub: they must be prepared before they can be used. The strength and malleability of the metal are entirely dependent upon its purity; and the native ore contains various earthy minerals besides the metallic iron. It is composed of flint, clay, carbon, sulphur, and phosphorus, besides that subtle corrosive agent which holds its court unseen in the transparent atmosphere, and which chemists call oxygen—that oxygen which is the lurking principle of rust. All these things are mingled together, in what seems to be inextricable confusion, in iron ore. The workers of the metal, however, know the confusion must not be inextricable, and accordingly, by the persevering effort of ingenuity and skill, they have devised a way to extricate the giant from its entanglement. First, they *roast* the ore; that is, they expose it to considerable heat, by making heaps of mixed coal and ore, and setting fire to the mass. The roasted ore gets to be deprived of several impurities which cannot endure heat, and becomes somewhat light and spongy. Then it is placed in alternate layers, with coke or charcoal, and lime, and the whole is subjected to the refining fire of a blast-furnace. The corrosive oxygen of the ore, under this treatment, capriciously finds that it has a much stronger affection for one of the new-comers, the charcoal, than for its old associate, the sturdy metal; and so takes up with its fresh companion, and flies away with it in the state of vapour, vanishing through the air. The flint and clay, in the same way, make the discovery that they are near relatives of the lime, and forthwith strike up a sort of family union, forming among them an earthy scum or slag. The iron, fairly put upon its *mettle* by this base desertion, waxes furiously hot, and melts into a liquid. The superintendents of the process, catching it at this advantage, snatch away the earthy scum from an upper opening in the furnace, and draw off the molten mass through a lower one, into channells and moulds prepared for its reception. When it runs into these moulds, it has lost the principal part of the impurities with which it was combined; it still, however, retains enough to interfere with its constructional integrity. It has still mingled with its mass five per cent. of carbon, and smaller quantities of sulphur, phosphorus, and other similar ingredients, which have the effect of rendering its grain coarse, and its consistence brittle. When it has cooled in the moulds, in this semi-purified

state it constitutes the crude pig-iron, or cast iron, of the manufacturers. This cast iron has three times less tenacity, and once and a half less resiliency, or power of recovering its original condition, when slightly interfered with, than the metal possesses in its purest form.

In order that cast iron may be brought into the purest condition the metal can assume, it is again melted in a fierce furnace, and then, when molten, it is splashed about by the end of an iron rod. Corrosive oxygen floating round in the air, thus invited, enters again upon its old pranks; seizes more of the carbon, sulphur, and phosphorus, and flies off with them as vapour. The remains of other less abundant impurities collect into a slight scum, and there then remains tolerably pure iron, which is taken from the furnace as it consolidates in cooling, and transferred to the anvil, to be there knocked and kneaded by the hammer, until it gets dense and close-grained, or rather close-fibred, under the repeated assaults. This process of preparing the cast iron for the operations of the forge, by agitating it when in a molten state, is expressively designated by the term *puddling*. When the cast iron has lost in the puddling four out of its five per cent. of carbon, it has been changed into steel. Steel is a carburet of iron, containing one pound of carbon to every ninety-nine pounds of iron. When the remaining one per cent. of carbon has been almost entirely removed, there remains pure malleable iron.

One great drawback upon the employment of this process for the preparation of malleable iron, has hitherto been the heavy expense of the fuel that of necessity has to be employed in the repeated meltings. Some of the best kinds of iron are only procured after six successive fusings. In addition to this difficulty, it has always been found impossible, also, to prepare any very large quantity at once. Founders have thought they had effected wonders when they have turned out some four or five hundredweights by one puddling. The railings which surround the cathedral of St Paul's in London were made of iron, procured by the puddling process in Sussex, at the expense of £7000.

All this, however, appears now to pertain to the past rather than to the present. A civil engineer of London has just patented a plan for the preparation of malleable iron by a new process, by which he is able to deal with the metal in almost any quantity at once. He has experimentally shewn his ability to convert five tons of molten cast iron into a vast lump of pure malleable iron, in thirty-five minutes; and it is stated that, by the use of his process, an equal quantity of iron railing with that which stands round St Paul's might be furnished at the comparatively trifling cost of £230.

This new process of Mr Bessemer's consists merely in forcing air through the molten pig-iron, in the place of splashing up the molten iron into the air. The molten iron, drawn off from the slag in the usual way, after the first roasting and melting, is received red-hot into a sort of basin, instead of into moulds. This basin has holes at its bottom, communicating with a very powerful pair of blast-bellows, worked by steam. The air-blast is turned on before the red-hot liquid metal is received into the basin; and the result is, that the metal is prevented from running into the holes by the out-set of the blast, and that the streams of air rush through it, tossing it violently to and fro with a sort of fiery boiling. The fierce air-blast forces the carbon combined with the iron into a furious combustion, and the heat of the molten liquid is thus raised higher and higher as the blast goes on. The carbon, which is a superfluous impurity, is itself converted into a valuable fuel through the force of the blast. First, a bright flame and an eruption of sparks burst from the mass; then the fiery liquid swells, and throws up the impurities to the

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surface as a kind of earthy froth, which is composed of these impurities entangled with oxide of iron by fusion. The sulphur and phosphorus are burned off with the carbon, and after a few minutes, when the flame subsides, there remains nothing behind but the perfectly cleansed iron, ready to be drawn off through the vent-hole of the basin, and more pure than the metal procured after half-a-dozen successive fusings by the old plan. The exact quality of the iron drawn off depends, however, upon the extent to which the blast has been carried. The mass passes gradually, during purification, through the condition of cast steel and hard steel into that of soft malleable iron. There is an intermediate form, which Mr Bessemer calls 'semi-steel,' which is harder than iron, and less brittle than steel, and which he states will prove to be of inconceivable value for all purposes where lightness, strength, and durability are required to be combined. The cast iron loses eighteen per cent. by the time the purification has been carried to the utmost.

Such, then, is the new promise which has just been held out in these iron-days. The metal which is in such enormous demand for works of surpassing extent and strength, is to be furnished in the most perfect state, in tenfold quantities, and with more than a tenfold saving of the cost of fuel used in the preparation. There is to be one roasting and one melting, in the place of half-a-dozen tedious and costly fusings; air is to be blown through the molten liquid, and presto! in a few short minutes, huge masses of the finest grained iron are to be ready for the hammer and the anvil. If this promise be fulfilled, the best steel, which is now worth from L.20 to L.30 the ton, will be furnished in any required quantity at the cost of L.6 the ton, and malleable iron will be sold at the same price, instead of at L.8, 10s. the ton. It has been calculated that this improved process of Mr Bessemer's will produce, when generally adopted, a saving to Great Britain of a sum equal to five millions of pounds sterling every year.

[Our readers may be aware that different opinions have been expressed regarding Mr Bessemer's process. The above paper is by an esteemed contributor, and a man well known in general science; but for our part, we are disinclined to hazard, on such a question, any opinion of our own, having had no opportunity of observing the new process.—Ed.]

THE DRAMATIC CENSORSHIP AND THE PROSCRIBED PLAYS.

PREVIOUS to the tenth year of the reign of George II., the dramatic censorship as a state institution had no legal existence in England. From the reign of Henry VIII., indeed, a control of stage-performances was exercised by the lord-chamberlain or master of the revels; but this authority was not recognised by law. It was as much an encroachment upon the public liberties, on the part of the sovereign, as the power he claimed to create monopolies; and it is owing probably to the circumstance of its being, if not vexatiously—for this it could not fail to be—but at least sparingly exercised, that it was, for the most part, patiently submitted to by those who might have legally resisted it. It is not until the reign of Charles II. that the first recorded instance occurs of the performance of a play being prohibited by the lord-chamberlain. This honour of priority belongs to the *Maid's Tragedy* of Beaumont and Fletcher, which was followed soon afterwards by Lee's *Lucius Junius Brutus* and Dryden's *Prologue to the Prophetess*. In the reign of Queen Anne, the tragedy of *Mary Queen of Scots* was interdicted by the same authority, and apparently, like its predecessors, upon political grounds. The next best play that suffered from the censor's shears was Cibber's alteration

of *Richard III.*; but in this instance, at least, we can almost pardon the master of the revels for the way in which he exercised his assumed authority. 'When *Richard III.*, as altered from Shakspeare,' says Cibber in his *Apology*, 'came from his (the master's) hands to the stage, he had expunged the whole first act without sparing a line. This extraordinary stroke of a *sic volo* occasioned my applying to him for the small indulgence of a speech or two, that the other four acts might limp on with a little less absurdity. No; he had not leisure to consider what might be separately inoffensive. He had an objection to the whole act; and the reason he gave for it was, that the distresses of King Henry, who is killed by Richard in the first act, would put weak people too much in mind of King James, then living in France.'

A much more memorable instance, however, which occurred a few years later, in the prohibition of Gay's opera of *Polly*, interfered so offensively with the rights of literary property, as to excite general disgust and dissatisfaction. *Polly*, which Gay intended as a sequel to the *Beggars' Opera*, had been accepted by Mr Rich, and everything was ready for rehearsal, when the lord-chamberlain sent an order from the country, prohibiting the manager from rehearsing the play until it had been first of all supervised by his grace. In his preface to the published opera, Gay gives the following account of the suppression of the piece:—

'It was on Saturday morning, December 7, 1728, that I waited upon the lord-chamberlain. I desired to have the honour of reading the opera to his grace, but he ordered me to leave it with him, which I did, upon expectation of having it returned upon the Monday following; but I had it not till Thursday, December 12, when I received it from his grace with this answer: "That it was not allowed to be acted, but commanded to be suppressed." This was told me in general, without any reasons assigned or any charge against me of my having given any particular offence.'

He proceeds to state that, subsequently to the prohibition, he had been told that he was accused, in general terms, of having written many disaffected and seditious pamphlets; and he ascribes the suppression of his opera rather to the ill feeling which this false accusation had excited against him at court than to any obnoxious passages in the opera itself, although there were not wanting those who also charged him with having filled his piece with slander against particular great persons. There seems reason to believe that the suppression of *Polly* originated in hostile feelings towards the author; for the piece contains nothing calculated to give offence beyond such general strokes of satire as had delighted the town in the *Beggars' Opera*; and the moral of it is perfectly unexceptionable, for Macheath, who is reprieved, in defiance of the laws of poetical justice, in the first opera, is regularly hanged in the second.

The arbitrary proceedings of the chamberlain excited, as we have said, general disgust. The indignation of the people was roused by an act of oppression which interfered at once with their own amusements and with the rights of individuals; and on the publication of the opera by subscription, the sympathy universally felt for the author is said to have fully indemnified him for the pecuniary loss he had sustained by the exclusion of his production from the stage. That pecuniary loss, however, could not be estimated with any degree of certainty. Gay was in the zenith of his reputation; he had just realised upwards of L.2000 by an opera of which the success had been unprecedented, and he had a fair right to expect a considerable accession of fortune from a piece which, whatever may have been said of its inferiority to the *Beggars' Opera*, abounds in strokes of pleasantry not unworthy of its author, and is in its lyrical parts fully equal to his more celebrated production. It is

as an invasion of literary property that the lord-chamberlain's arbitrary and illegal suppression of this opera appears in the most odious light; and it is by considering in this point of view the act which established the existence of the dramatic censorship, that we are enabled to form a correct estimate of the unjust and oppressive character of the measure.

This measure was introduced into the House of Commons, by Sir Robert Walpole, on the 24th of May 1737. It bore to be a 'Bill to explain and amend so much of the 12th of Anne, entitled an Act for the more effectual punishing of Rogues, Vagabonds, Sturdy Beggars, and Vagrants, as relates to Common Players of Interludes.' The history of the bill is curious. A farce called the *Golden Rump*, said to be fraught with addition and abuse of the government, had been offered to the manager of one of the theatres, who, either with a view of recommending himself to the minister, or of obtaining some reward for his forbearance, immediately put the manuscript into the hands of Walpole. Walpole, who had long been annoyed with the freedom with which the measures of the administration had been attacked and ridiculed in theatrical productions, determined on making this farce of the *Golden Rump* a pretext for subjecting stage-performances to a system of control which should effectually relieve the government from all further annoyances of a similar description. He accordingly, after reading a number of extracts from this manuscript farce, introduced the measure by which the number of playhouses is limited, and an arbitrary power is vested in the lord-chamberlain to expunge a part, or suppress the whole, of any dramatic pieces which may be offered for representation on the stage. The measure, though in a constitutional point of view it was one of no ordinary importance, since it gave to an officer of the household, as was observed by Lord Chesterfield in his celebrated speech on the second reading of the bill, a more absolute power than we intrust even to the sovereign—though it aimed, indirectly, a blow at the liberty of the press—though it imposed shackles on a branch of our literature, and created a monopoly in theatrical property, as objectionable on general principles of commercial policy as it is injurious to the interests of the monopolists themselves—appears to have passed without much opposition. The speech of Lord Chesterfield on the second reading of the bill is the only evidence which remains to us of its having met with any opposition in its progress through the Houses. In the Commons, it seems to have been hurried through its several stages with as much precipitation and as little discussion as an ordinary turnpike bill. It was ordered to be brought in on the 20th of May 1737. It was read a first time on the 24th, a second time on the 25th, committed and ordered to be reported, with its amendments, on the 26th, reported—all the amendments but one being agreed to—on the 27th, and passed on the 1st of June, when Mr Pelham was ordered to carry it to the Lords. In the Lords, it was read a first time on the same day, a second time, after a debate, on the 2d of June, and the third time on the 6th of June. It was returned to the Commons on the 8th, and received the royal assent on the 21st.

Such is the history of the playhouse bill, as it has been handed down to us by the younger Walpole. It was ostensibly introduced for the purpose of improving, or raising new securities for the morality of the stage, and left the stage precisely what it was before. The power of supervision vested in the lord-chamberlain is expressly limited to *new* plays and to *new* scenes or additions made to old ones—a limitation well enough calculated to suppress theatrical pasquinades of a political description, and to cut off for the future this source of political annoyance; but it left all the licentiousness and immorality to be found in our dramatic literature, from the rise of the English

stage down to the 24th of June 1737, wholly untouched. It left the managers of theatres at perfect liberty to reproduce all the filth and obscenity scattered with no unsparing hand over the writings of our older dramatists; it left them at liberty to perform, without stint or curtailment, the plays of more modern writers, from which the sturdy nonjuror, Jeremy Collier, in his *View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, had collected a mass of passages which could not be denied to afford ample colour for his charge. If the stage, therefore, has become more pure, the improvement cannot be ascribed to the efficacy of a measure which left all its impurities uncorrected; if at the present day the comedies of Wycherley and Congreve are excluded from the stage, the exclusion is not to be ascribed to the virtuous discrimination of lord-chamberlains or their deputies, but to the refinement—we had almost said the fastidiousness—of the public taste. About thirty years ago, an attempt was made by the manager of Covent Garden Theatre to revive some of the comedies of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Cibber, after they had been subjected to such expurgatory alterations as seemed calculated to quiet the most scrupulous morality and to appease the fiercest virtue. The comedies were admirably acted, but the attempt failed; for the wit of these writers, after all that could be effected in the way of thinning its luxuriance, was found to be too strongly impregnated with licentiousness to be tolerated by a modern audience.

Whether, as a political security, the playhouse bill is at all more efficacious than as a moral security, we shall enable the reader to judge, by bringing under his notice some of the more prominent instances in which the power of the censor has been exercised. Unfortunately, no portion of the *Golden Rump* has been preserved, by which we can judge how much danger to the government was averted by its timely suppression. But although unfortunate in this respect, we have still the means of judging of the species of dramatic composition which really excited the fears of the government in Brooke's tragedy of *Gustavus Vasa*, the performance of which was prohibited, by order of the lord-chamberlain, in the year 1739, when the play had arrived at the last rehearsal. The subject of this tragedy is the successful attempt, on the part of Gustavus, to wrest the Swedish crown from Christian of Denmark. At a time when a pretender to the throne of these kingdoms existed, the lord-chamberlain might perhaps have considered it prudent to object generally to the subject of this play, without reference to the manner in which the author had treated it; but it is most probable that the prohibition of *Gustavus Vasa* was occasioned by particular passages in the drama, in which liberal and patriotic sentiments were too prominently introduced to be palatable to the existing government. The following are, in all probability, some of the passages which gave the greatest offence:—

The tyrant spoke, and his licentious band
Of blood-stained ministry were loosed to ruin.

He has debauched the genius of our country,
And rides triumphant, while her captive sons
Await his nod, the silken slaves of pleasure,
Or fettered in their fears.

Some passages might be regarded with the more alarm, as they were not encumbered with any precise meaning:

A cause like ours is its own sacrament:
Truth, justice, reason, love, and liberty,
Th' eternal links that clasp the world, are in it;
And he who breaks their sanction breaks all law,
And infinite connection.

Here I take my stand!

Although contention rise upon the clouds,
Mix heaven with earth, and roll the ruin onward;
Here will I fix and breast me to the shock
Till I or Denmark fall.

These speeches certainly savour a little of 'hydrostatics and other inflammatory branches of learning'; but an audience whose loyalty could withstand the tirades of Ancient Pistol, against which the legislature afforded no protection, might well enough, we should think, have escaped uncontaminated by such patriotic effusions. Besides, the effect of passages of this description is sufficiently counteracted by many others of a most unexceptionable tendency: of these we shall give but one example. Gustavus, though in the guise of a copper-miner, and though fully participating in the toils of his fellow-labourers, for

His hands out-toil the hind, while on his brow
Sits patience, bathed in the laborious drop
Of painful industry—

is nevertheless described as striking everybody with that undefinable awe which legitimate sovereigns are apt to inspire:

Amid these mines he earns the hireling's portion—
Six moons have changed upon the face of night
Since here he first arrived in servile weeds,
But yet of men majestic I observed him,
And ever as I gazed, some nameless charm,
A wondrous greatness not to be concealed,
Broke through his form, and awed my soul before him.

In short, the copper-miners of Dalecarlia, in the tragedy, distinguished the monarch in his mining-jacket as plainly as the lady in the farce could see the gentleman through the coarsest corduroys.

For the rest, though there are some few spirited passages in this tragedy, it is too deficient in dramatic incident to be effective on the stage, and it is, upon the whole, much too feeble a production to justify the alarm or to excite the hostility of a government, except, perhaps, on the grounds we have adverted to, which, however, have ceased to exist with the extinction of the family of the Stuarts. There was no lack of zeal at this time on the part of the dramatic censor in exercising his new functions, for in the same year Thomson's *Edward and Eleanor* was suppressed—upon what grounds, Johnson observes, it would be hard to discover. Three reasons may be assigned for the suppression of this play, however little they may justify such an exercise of authority: in the first place, Thomson had rendered himself obnoxious to the ministry by his poem of *Liberty*; secondly, the tragedy was partly written for the purpose of eulogising the Prince of Wales, who held no part in the affections of his royal father; and thirdly, it contains many such alarming passages as the following:

Besides, who knows what evil counsellors
Are gathered round the throne! In times like these,
Disturbed and low'ring with unsettled freedom,
One step to lawless power, one bold attempt
Renewed, the least infringement on our charters,
Would in the giddy nation raise a tempest.

A nobler office far! on the firm base
Of well-proportioned liberty to build
The common quiet, happiness, and glory
Of king and people, England's rising grandeur.
To you, my prince, this task of right belongs.
Has not the royal heir a juster claim
To share his father's inmost heart and counsels,
Than aliens to his interest, those who make
A property, a market of his honour?

Of the prohibition of Foote's play of *The Trip to Calais*, which was obtained through the influence of

the Duchess of Kingston with the lord-chamberlain, we shall only observe that it places in a striking light the arbitrary nature of the power intrusted to that officer. If the Duchess of Kingston could have proved that her character was libelled in this play by evidence of the intention of the author to ridicule her in the part of Lady Kitty Crocodile, the courts of law were open to her for redress. But there could have been no foundation in this case for the lord-chamberlain's arbitrary invasion of the rights of property, except the private communication of the duchess's belief that she was the person satirised by the dramatist; which belief might have been entirely unfounded, and was not sustained by any positive evidence on the face of the drama.

In the year 1823, the tragedy of *Caius Gracchus* was for some time withheld from the stage, in consequence, we presume, of the objections entertained by the deputy censor to the subject of the play; for when the piece was at length allowed to be performed, it was evident that there was nothing in the author's mode of dramatising the story of the Roman tribune which could possibly have offended the most captious censor or alarmed the most timid politician. The next play, however, and the last we shall now notice, on which the censor exercised his shears with a vigour which led to its withdrawal from representation, was made of sterner stuff: we allude to the late Sir Martin (then Mr) Shee's tragedy of *Alasco*. On this occasion, it should seem—from a spirited remonstrance addressed by Mr Shee to the lord-chamberlain on the conduct of his deputy, a functionary who, be it remembered, is commonly selected from a class of persons, the *genus irritabile vatum*, not the least likely to be influenced by literary prejudices and prepossessions, or to discover a want of temper and impartiality in passing judgment on the productions of their contemporaries—that the hostility shewn by this subordinate officer to the tragedy of *Alasco* was probably exasperated, if not occasioned, by a passage in the play which he might have construed into an attack upon his official dignity:

Why, if there were some slanderous tool of state,
Some taunting, dull, unmannered deputy.

It is hardly necessary to observe that this was one of the passages expunged by Colman. We will add a few others which underwent the same fate, that it may be seen how much the state was indebted to that officer for the vigilant discharge of his inquisitorial functions:

What little skill the patriot sword requires,
Our zeal may boast in midnight vigils schooled.
Those deeper tactics well contrived to work,
The mere machinery of mercenary war
We shall not need whose hearts are in the fray—
Who for ourselves, our homes, our country fight,
And feel in every blow we strike for freedom.

To brook dishonour from a knave in place.

When Roman crimes prevail, methinks 'twere well
Should Roman virtue still be found to punish them.
May every Tarquin meet a Brutus still,
And every tyrant feel one!

'Tis not rebellion to resist oppression;
'Tis virtue to avenge our country's wrongs,
And self-defence to strike at a usurper.

Hell's hot blisters on the backs
They turn so basely!

The last instance of erasure—there are several more of the same description—is curious, seeing that it proceeded from the pen of the author of *Broad Grins*, *My Nightgown and Slippers*, and *Poetical Vagaries*. There is no class of functionaries, according to the proverb, so skilful in apprehending delinquents as those who

have most assiduously cultivated the art of making other men's property their own; and it is upon this principle, we presume, that the extreme fastidiousness of the deputy-censor in the case of Sir Martin's tragedy is to be accounted for. He detects an exceptional expression, and makes, where he does not find, an indecent allusion, with that excess of purity and superlative display of delicacy which could belong only to a practised offender against the laws of decency and decorum.

We have now run over some of the most remarkable dramatic productions which have been suppressed upon political grounds, and have given a fair specimen of the most formidable passages in these productions, and would ask, in conclusion, whether it can be reasonably inferred that the state has ever gained by their suppression; and, above all, what the government is likely to gain, in the present times, and in the present state of public taste and feeling with regard to theatrical performances, by the continued exercise of the arbitrary power intrusted to the dramatic censor.

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.

LIFE AT THE SEA-SIDE.

'OLD times are changed, old manners gone,' since Lamb's delightful but wilful wit characterised our sea-side town as 'a place of fugitive resort, a heterogeneous assemblage of sea-mews and stock-brokers, amphi-rites of the town, and misses that coquet with the ocean.' Now it is the resort of the noble and distinguished of the land; stock-brokers are ignored during the season; the amphi-rites exist, but the misses find something better to coquet with than the ocean. Nay, at this very present time of writing, we have three ambassadors and our own prime-minister here! The open windows of a house in the grand terrace, called Eversfield Place, afford a peep at a whole bevy of flags which make the walls of the room look like those cards of signals wherewith the young gentlemen of the navy edify and delight their admiring mothers and cousins. This be-coloured mansion is the residence of the Russian admiral. Happily, 'forgive and forget' is a national proverb, and John Bull smiles benignly on the exhibition, and is delighted to welcome a gallant foe. The ambassador from the 'frozen Muscovite' dwells on the same terrace, and within a few doors, the envoy of the sultan, and the ambassador of France. We should like to know whether any place except ours can exhibit such a specimen as this of a 'happy family.'

Before, however, we begin to describe the life we lead here, let us try to draw the background of the picture, the landscape to our figures. Imagine—all who read this paper must, we suppose, have artistic imaginations—imagine a rocky coast, with a thousand little graceful curves and indentures; sands smooth and glittering with liquid pearls, and broken by masses of tiny black rocks, all covered with floating sea-weeds; a sea of laughing light, all ripples and soft, low sounds, with every variety of shadow floating over its mirror-like bosom; a quaint old town nestling beneath high cliffs, and crowned with the ruins of that castle which was once its tower of strength—and you will see Hastings. Turn to the right hand, traverse a portion of ground once called the 'Desert,' now a street of nice-looking shops, and, further on still, of small white-lodging-houses, and you will find yourself in St Leonards, a

far less picturesque but most comfortable and aristocratic watering-place. The towns, to our fancy, are like sisters of one house, bearing a family resemblance to each other, with the differences belonging to age and character. Hastings, the elder, with something of the grace of years, the soft shadows of time, and the charm of memory hanging over her—domestic and cozy, moreover. St Leonards, with the elegance and attractions of a fashionable belle in the heyday of her beauty and her coquetry. So much of needful landscape-painting; now for the life and movement of the 'figures,' as Wilson called the people he saw walking beneath the oaks of Windsor Forest.

Life at Hastings, however, is but a holiday life after all; it is not work-a-day existence, not a succession of grave duties, but of fun and pleasure-parties, whether by land or sea. A bell wakes us early in the morning—too early for any other place save this. It is the reveille of the Sisters of the good Shepherd who dwell above us on the cliff, and gaze from their voluntary thralldom over the freest and wildest of all elements—recluses in the midst of the heyday of this world's bustle. Very good and charitable they are, and worthy of all consideration and respect. We obey the bell-voice, rise, and walk up to the level platform, which is above Eversfield Place, and in front of the convent. How gloriously the sea dances in the early sunlight that glitters on the white sails in the distance, and tinges old Hastings Castle, breaking the hill shadows with arrows of golden light! How fresh and wooingly the sea-air comes on our brow, soothing the spirit, and making the heart feel loving and glad, as in childhood! Wise old Greeks, who fabled that the birthplace of love was the ocean!

The convent is but a heterogeneous mass of buildings, though there is the beginning of what promises to be a noble church. It is not now permitted to strangers to go over the interior; but some years ago an old Irish lady took us through the apartments, and we were much pleased with them. She was exceedingly anxious for our approval, and on our objecting to the unpleasant character of the pictures in the large room—appropriated, we believe, to the priest—she said that to a true member of her church they were exceedingly delightful, 'specially that of *St Aristotle*!' This put us in mind of an old Welsh woman, who once told us she supposed the reason St David hadn't a collect allotted to him in the English Prayer-book, like the rest of the apostles, 'was because the English Church was jealous of his being a Welshman.'

Bathing begins very early—at seven o'clock, generally—and continues for some hours. The Amphi-rites of to-day are good, hardy, merry women, and, like all females, much in communion with the sea, whether 'caller-herring' criers or *poissardes* of Boulogne, far beyond their inland sisters in strength and energy. They are a peculiar race, too, and often say very quaint funny things. *Par exemple*, a lady complained to one of them the other day that she had brought her to bathe close to a gentleman's machine. At first she pretended to ignore the fact, then said apologetically: 'Taint a man, really, my lady; it's only one of the clergymen bodies.' Nevertheless, the clergy are held in deservedly high repute here. In Hastings, the spirit of the old Henry of Huntingdon, its former lord, is still prevalent, and of course the preachers are popular; moreover, they are excellent men, good parish priests, and persons of intelligence. But we are digressing. After breakfast, people here either walk, ride, or drive. We generally stroll along the shore, examining that sea-life which fashion is now bringing under the observation of most sea-shore visitors. The misses of 1856 don't coquet with the ocean, but with its inmates. An aquarium is to be seen in nearly every house, and very interesting it

really is to watch the flower-like existences it contains—the barnacles opening their tiny shells with a constant twinkling in the water, and the anemones varying their form and colour, like living kaleidoscopes. One might spend months on the shore, making acquaintance with its inhabitants—

Each on its separate track of life,
And each a mystery.

There is also a peculiar sea-marvel at Hastings—that is, a submarine forest, visible from the surface above. A few days ago, the tide retreating beyond its wont, left a huge trunk of oak or elm visible. Mr Briscoe, the owner of Bohemia, happened to be riding on the sands at the time, and the fishermen pointed it out to him; he rode back, intending to send some men and cart-horses to drag the revealed trunk to the upper earth, but before they could reach the spot, the waters had again covered their prey; and it may be, he tells us, ten years before the salt-water veil is again lifted.

And all the time one strays upon the smooth glittering sands, sounds of sweet music float towards one from the land. Hastings has an excellent subscription band, as well as numerous itinerant musicians; and it is no little addition to the pleasure of the scene, to hear familiar music, full of memories, stealing to us with every sigh of the wind. The whole coast itself is one grand Eolian harp—full of mysterious utterances, of sobbing and sighing, and muttering breezes, not to speak of the great voice of the ocean.

Ascending from the beach, we find ourselves amidst the active, busy pleasure-life of the idlers on the Esplanade. What groups of people! handsome girls, all looking like very tall mushrooms—thanks to the prevailing fashion of brown hats—talking and laughing together; tiny children of all ages and complexions, running about with wooden spades in their hands, bent on geological researches on the beach and sands; men and women bearing baskets full of shell-manufactures of all kinds, and of ornaments made from the wood of the buried forest. And that sadder life which is the melancholy characteristic of the place, the feeble invalid reclining on her perambulator, or leaning on his crutches. Carriages of all kinds pass and repass incessantly in the road, from the pretty pony-chair, in which yonder lovely girl drives her mother, to the barouche and four, and the 'fast'-looking *char à banc* from Bohemia.

These walking mornings are sometimes diversified by a sail: for ourselves, in the fine lugger belonging to a friend, which almost deserves the name of yacht; for others, in boats of nearly similar size, which, like omnibuses, carry a certain number, each paying a small price. Delightful it is to feel the waves

bound beneath us like a steed
That knows its rider;

and to enjoy the excitement of a difficult landing; for only at high-water can a large boat touch the shore, and even then she has to be hauled up on the steep shelving beach by means of a horse and capstan. One of the pleasantest sails we ever took off Hastings was on board the preventive vessel then on the station; but it ended in such rough weather that return became impossible, and we were obliged to put into Newhaven, a recently formed harbour. It was in 1848, just as the kings of modern Europe were running away in all directions, and a gentleman of our party had no trouble in persuading 'mine hostess' of the little inn that an aged baronet of the party was the king of Denmark, and we, the forlorn followers of his flight. She was nobly respectful, considering our supposed fallen fortunes; but not at all 'startled from her propriety,' only observing coolly: 'Well, sure 'tisn't no time ago since the king and queen of France put here!'

This uncertainty of landing, and fickle nature of our climate, render land-excursions pleasanter generally than those by sea; and there is much to attract the visitor in the neighbourhood of Hastings. Fairlight Glen, with its 'lovers' seat,' and view of an immensity of blue sea on one side, and rich champaign country on the other. Multitudes of flies, crowded with the motley population of a sea-bathing place, are always to be seen on fine days near Fairlight Mill, or on the road to Hollington Wood, in which stands the most rustic of old-world churches. It is said by the authentic tradition of the peasantry that this very peculiar structure was built by angels! A church was designed on the neighbouring height, and the building begun; but every night beheld the day's work removed, and in the morning the workmen had always to recommence their labours. This they must have done with most unwearied perseverance, since the materials they used thus vainly served to build Hollington Church. 'For it was the fiend,' says the legend, 'who took away nightly the stones used in the daytime, and hid them in Hollington Wood. Here they remained for a while unseen by man; but one bright Sunday morning there came from that thick coppice of huge trees, through which there neither was nor is a road, the sound of the church-going bell, and in wonder and awe men obeyed the call, urged by curiosity to trace the voice; and there, in the centre of those old trees, amongst which only a tiny footpath winds, they found a church—the church of Hollington—which angel hands had doubtless built, since till that moment human eye had not seen it.' So runs the tale. We cannot say the architecture tends to confirm it, though the strange uncleared narrow access undoubtedly does.

But Hastings, full as it is of historic memories, needs very little the help of traditional lore to make it interesting. Every spot is connected with the remembrance of some great event in our annals at the most important of all times for England.

Battle Abbey might take an article for itself—with its noble ruins, its embowered 'pleached' walks, its gardens, and its 'Roll,' and its old paintings. It was church-land originally; and so strange and so sad has been the fate of many of its possessors, that it has served to 'point a tale' in Sir Henry Spelman's *History of Sacrilege*. One incident of a more recent character is so singular that we cannot resist the temptation to relate it.

The wife of one of the former baronets fled from her husband, taking with her her only child, a daughter. The father could, and, of course, would claim his child, and legal measures were resorted to, to recall the unfortunate little girl. But the mother, amid all her sin and error, retained her maternal affection, and could not bear to lose her daughter; so letters were sent to Sir Godfrey, to tell him of the dangerous illness of the child; then came the account of her death; next the little coffin for interment in the ancestral tomb. The fraud was too daring to be suspected. The remains of a kid were deposited in the family vault, and the father believed himself childless. Meantime, the infant girl was dressed in male attire, and taught to believe herself a boy. For many years she continued to be thought the son of Lord —, with whom her mother had fled. It was not until many a weary day had gone by that the unhappy father was undeceived, and reclaimed his child, then a lovely woman. The likeness of this 'translated' young lady is amongst the Battle pictures.

It is pleasant to return from one of these drives to an early and 'severe' tea, drank in the deep bay-window which overlooks the sea. One sits dreamily listening to the dash of the waves on the shore—that deep, strange sound, unlike all others, which is heard above the music of the bands, and the dear familiar voices round the board; and a wild phantasmagoria

of monastic walks, old ruins, or sunshiny woods flits through our brain during that pleasant rest. Eventide in its loveliest form is here—

Parting day

Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone—and all is gray.

Red rose tints resting on the old castle, and tinging the heaving sea; a whole banner of crimson floating over Beachy Head; and then the soft gliding in of twilight, and the hush of the dying day. Good-night, gentle reader. So closes that portion of time in our life at Hastings.

HOW WE BUILD IN LONDON.

A house fell down in the city a few weeks ago, not a great way from what *Punch* calls the Royal Brigand's Bank. A stir was made about it, because somebody was killed, and it turned out on inquiry that the house was an old one; perhaps one of those that were built after the great fire in 1666. So, of course, nobody was to blame.

Now, what I want to ask is, whether anybody is to blame for the many new houses that are 'run up' every year, and that are always ready to fall down—would fall down indeed, if they tried to stand alone. Perhaps you will wonder how this can be, seeing that we have a Building Act here in London, and inspectors to take care that its provisions are complied with, and penalties for evasions. It sounds all right; but haven't we got an act against profane swearing—and is that obeyed? Ah! innocent reader, if you would only take a walk with me for half a day, I could show you how our Building Act is respected.

I ought to know something about the matter, for I am a handicraftsman, and have helped to put the finishing-touch to many a house—if house be the proper name. I could take you, reader, to street after street, and shew you that these so-called houses ought to be ticketed *dangerous*, as the ice is in the parks in winter. The act provides that for a certain width of road, houses shall have such and such a height. I can point out houses to you which scornfully look down from a height of several feet upon the legal limit. I could shew you dishonest party-walls, rotten foundations, and sham drainage; and yet the act declares in one of its clauses, that considerations to be especially regarded 'are the safety of the public, as against insecure construction, and the spread of fire.'

For confirmation, you may turn back to the *Proceedings* of the Royal Institute of British Architects, where you will find it in discussions on the subject held among the members of that enterprising corporation. You will see how one said that the act defines the thickness of walls, varying according to the height; another, that inspectors were apathetic; another, that evasions were possible, and often practised; and more to the same purport. After reading those reports, you will perhaps wonder that modern houses stand at all. They wouldn't stand, if it wasn't that they had others to lean against. One lends a shoulder to the other, and so they manage to keep the perpendicular for a while; but, after all, it is nothing more than cripple helping cripple. And this is London—the head-quarters of civilisation and liberty—the emporium of the commerce of the world!

Suppose we go a little into particulars. I haven't kept my eyes shut when I have been at my work of finishing and decorating, and one consequence is, that I have witnessed many of the tricks and scandals of the builders. It is not an unusual thing for the plaster of a new London house to change from white to a dirty brown, or to fall off the wall or ceiling in patches; and many a tenant has been astonished

by the bad smells in rooms which have never been inhabited. There's a reason for everything, if you only knew it. Did you ever see scavengers scooping up the mud in the streets after a rainy day? This mud they call 'micmac'; and rare slimy stuff it is, as you have found out, if you have ever been splashed by it. The men of the broom cart it away to secret places, where great heaps of it are accumulated, and when dry enough to be sifted, they sell it to the *builders*. But what do the builders do with it? I'll tell you. They pass it through a sieve, to free it from stones and other coarse-grained refuse; then to forty bushels of the pulverised micmac they add a bushel or two of lime: and what then? Why, then they use it for plastering the walls and ceilings of new houses.

There's the economy in this. Mud is cheaper than lime, and besides, owing to its cohesiveness, the cost of cow-hair is saved, and the labour of mixing it in. The tenacious mud will be sure to stick to the walls, at least it will do so long enough to answer the builder's purpose; so you see nothing could be better. And what an admirable way of utilising street-sweepings!—one that I would recommend to the attention of our Metropolitan Board of Works; provided always, that 'Works' be the proper term for a body which as yet has shewn so little capacity for working. What matter that your bedroom smells like a dead-house, or worse, every time the weather becomes damp; that the offensive odour turns you sick, should there be a prevalence of rain; that the paper which your wife always admired, because it was so 'nice a pattern,' grows blotchy with foul stains, hideous to look on? What matter, I say, if mud can be turned to such profitable account, and your builder is enabled to keep his phaeton? In your innocence, you have always thought that none but savage tribes—such as the Grimphisogs and Rawgrub-gobblers—dwelt in mud-houses, and you won't be very willing to believe that here, in this world-renowned London, you have been living in a mud-house ever since the day you brought your blushing Marian home from the honeymoon.

Possibly the notion of such a thing may shock you. But try to forget all the abominations that go to the composition of micmac, and imagine it a compound of the dust of an imperial Cæsar or two, to say nothing of dukes, barons, and members of parliament, and you will be consoled.

I read once in a periodical that the cause of bad smells in rooms was the many thicknesses of paper on the walls, the new having been pasted over the old till the accumulation began to ferment. I didn't believe it, because I knew better. Take my word for it, if the walls are all right, you may 'stick up,' as they say in Staffordshire, a new layer of paper every year as long as you live without any offence to your olfactories. But how can walls be sound or wholesome when, as I have seen, the mortar is one part lime and three parts mould—when, as I have also seen, the labourers, to save themselves trouble, slake the lime with water dipped from a filthy sewer!

One fact more, and then I shall get out of the mud. I have told you how economical our builders are in the matter of lime, but what if I tell you that in many a party-wall they do without lime entirely. I have seen party-walls put together with nothing but unsophisticated mud—genuine and unadulterated mud. I could pull every brick from its place as easily as a baker lifts loaves from his shelf. Of course, such walls are always damp, if not slimy; but perhaps the builder regards damp as an additional security against fire. I have been up on house-tops where the walls came through the roof, the said walls being as easily displaced as if merely piled of loose bricks.

And even the mud itself is saved in laying

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foundations. Builders of our day—ought we not to be proud of them?—dispense with mud, mortar, or cement below the ground. Pile 'em up! The weight of the house is sure to keep the bricks in place. They'll last our time, and that's as much as can be expected nowadays.

And then the bricks. Did you ever contemplate a London brick? It would be yellowish-gray in colour were it not defaced by what looks like dirty bruises, and here and there a deep crack, and a clinker sticking out. It is meant to be a parallelogram, but it is no such thing; for it is all muddy, twisted, crooked, and thicker at one end than at the other. Some, if you take them up by one end, will break in two with their own weight; and you shall hardly see one that is not a scandal to the nimble art of brick-making. Even in Victoria Street—that aristocratic and vaunted Westminster thoroughfare—I have seen piles of such rubbish—bricks I cannot call them—used in the building of those stately houses which are let out in flats to tiptop gentlefolk. And this being the case within sight of the Houses of Parliament, of the Queen's palace, what must it be a mile or two further away! Baked rubbish and mud. Why will the Society of Arts persist in offering prizes for new building-materials when here is such abundance always at hand!

I shall never forget how once, during a walk in Gloucestershire, I came to a brick-field, where the piles of large, sound, well-shaped red bricks were a pleasure to behold. I took one and another in my hand, and surveyed them with that feeling of satisfaction always inspired by good workmanship. An antiquary could not have been more delighted with Roman potsherds and rusty Saxon sword-blades, than I was with the Gloucestershire bricks.

About two years ago, I was papering a house—a rather stylish house within cannon-shot of the *Elephant and Castle*. The drawing-room had a deep handsome cornice, an ornamental circle in the middle of the ceiling, and the paint of all the wood-work was no bad imitation of mottled maple, and the paper a graceful convoluted pattern. I felt rather proud of it when my part was finished, and the next day began to paper the bedroom above. Intent on my work, I jumped on one occasion to the floor from the steps on which I had to mount with every breadth of paper, and was at the same moment startled by a tremendous crash beneath me. I ran down stairs: clouds of dust were pouring from the drawing-room, and the room itself was by that time a wreck. Shaken by my jump, the heavy cornice and the ceiling had given way, and fallen to the floor, leaving the bare laths exposed. The paint was all scratched and bruised; the paper was torn, hanging here and there in tatters, and furrowed through to the plaster. It was a woful commentary on modern building, and in a house intended to be let for L.60 a year. Are we not clever people in London?

No longer ago than last winter, just as I had finished supper one evening, and was taking my ease in slippers feet by the fire, a messenger came with a hurried knock to summon me to Eglantine Cottage, where my services were instantly required. What a sweet name! Eglantine—redolent of delicious odours and sunshine, of beauty reposing in luxuriant bowers: anything, indeed, but unhappiness. However, on arrival, I was conducted to the kitchen, and asked to look at the ceiling. A dance was going on in the room above, and the ceiling bent and undulated like waves turned upside down, and little shreds of plaster sprinkled the floor. There was no time to be lost: I recommended an immediate cessation of the dance, and, running home, speedily returned with the boards and joists necessary for shoring up the ceiling. When this was done, the light fantasies went to work again,

and capered into the small hours, no longer in danger of dropping through upon the heads of the cook and housemaid. I rather expect that this shoring up will be an annual job for me at Eglantine Cottage.

Perhaps you will think this is an uncommon occurrence. No such thing. There is many a house in London let upon the express stipulation that the tenant shall never have a dance in the drawing-room: houses being built not to live and be merry in, but merely to stay in. Who knows whether by and by the little children will not be forbidden to romp in the nursery, lest they endanger the whole edifice.

You wouldn't wonder that floors sway and ceilings bend, if you saw how slender, and how few and far between, are the joists by which they are supported. I have seen floors laid on joists one inch and a quarter thick, and two feet six apart. The consequence of this is, that even if you don't want to dance, the windows and doors rattle every time you walk across the room: in fact, the house dances, whether the inhabitants do or not. You might as well live in a lantern, or in one of those Chinese houses all paper and bamboo. Not so very long ago, a man was tried for having stolen a number of scaffold poles. He was found guilty, as he deserved; and it came out on the trial, that, after stealing them, he quartered them lengthwise, and used the quarters as floor-joists in some houses he was building. Think of that!—the fourth of a six-inch pole, to sustain a family and their household gear. Talk of being on a raft on the stormy ocean after that! Fine specimens of this style may be seen in Battersea Fields. An enterprising builder once offered to sell me a row of six new houses in that 'desirable neighbourhood' for L.150!

A builder once offered me 'fippence a piece (twelve yards) all round,' to paper a row of ten houses, and to find paste as well as labour. This offer may be judged of when I tell you that the fair price for hanging paper is a shilling a piece. I told him 'twas impossible to hang it for 'fippence' with any hope of its remaining any time on the walls. He didn't care for that; if it would stay up three weeks, till he got the houses off his hands, that was all he wanted.

Botch-papering is kept in countenance by botch-painting. It would surprise you not a little to see how quickly two men will paint a row of houses; but not if you knew the dodge they are practising. The paint is nothing but a wash of water-colour well charged with size, and is laid on with a whitewash-brush wherever the surface is wide enough. It is finished off with a coat of varnish, and the only oil-paint used is on the window-sashes. No wonder your children's fingers so soon wear the paint off the doors and skirting! no wonder it washes off from the mantel-piece! If you buy cheap 'japanned' washstands and chests of drawers, you will find the 'japan' to be nothing more than water-colour.

That the cities of ancient Nineveh have become mere earthy mounds, nothing more in appearance than a swell in the great Mesopotamian plain, is well known to all of us through Mr Layard's remarkable explorations and discoveries. How long would it take to convert London into a similar mound? You won't want me to answer that question, for you will have no difficulty in calculating the time necessary for the decomposition of such a mass of rubbish into its original elements. The result would be accomplished long before the time assigned for the arrival of Mr Macaulay's New Zealander.

But you will say that all this has only to do with poor people's houses. If by poor people you mean such as pay from L.20 to L.30 a year rent, you are right; but let me tell you that such people constitute no small portion of the respectable middle class of London; that they pay their way honestly, and submit to self-imposed self-denying ordinances to get decent schooling for

their children; and that they deserve better treatment than most of them get from their landlords. Do you think it is fair to make a man pay even L.20 a year for living in a brick packing-case, that wouldn't stand an hour, if it hadn't others to lean against, as aforesaid?

It is very true that most of what is here mentioned took place in the great parish of Lambeth, where the archbishop lives in his palace at one edge of it; but you mustn't think that things are any better 'over the water,' which means on the Middlesex side. If it were necessary, I could soon convince you that St Pancras or Marylebone can't brag so very much over Lambeth. I have heard the president of the Institute of British Architects say—and he ought to know—that some of the worst building in London is in and around Russell Square. You won't find many L.20 or L.30 houses in that quarter. There is one house in the square, if not more, which trusts the entire weight of its three-flight staircase to a single nine-inch wall. After this, you will hardly desire to know any further particulars of rickety window-sashes, shrunken floors, leaky roofs, and cracking walls. You could slip your watch easily through the joints in some of the floors: perhaps the builder foresaw there would be an outcry for ventilation, and used green wood in order to provide against it. Seasoned wood is rare now-a-days. Don't expect your carpenter to be too virtuous, or you will be disappointed. Make up your mind beforehand that he *will* use green wood, and then you won't lament so bitterly over the dishonesty of the age, as one of our most eminent literary characters does. He paid a good price to have a new study built. It was a *study*—to use an artist's technicality—in which the builder depicted himself as knave. An Indian wigwam would have been preferable.

It was about 1804, that a Mr Burton began to build Russell Square, and set an example which later builders have so cunningly improved on. He perpetuated his name in Burton Crescent, that resort of foreign refugees; and if the square be bad, the crescent is worse. The president above mentioned says there is little hope of real amendment until builders cease to fancy themselves architects, and until architects are employed to direct builders. We have proof enough of what *can* be done with bricks and mortar in houses built in the reign of Queen Anne, or further back in that of Elizabeth. And the late Mr Cubitt shewed that it was possible to build good houses with more profit than bad ones. There is a new house at the corner of Chancery Lane and Fleet Street, which I recommend as a pattern to those builders who are fond of the dead-alive Gower Street style; and there is one in Southampton Street, Strand, which demonstrates the capabilities of coloured bricks, and the possibility of producing picturesque effects even in London. The way in which the chimneys are made to contribute to the architectural appearance, is worthy of all praise and imitation. They are not a deformity, but an ornament.

Cockneydom is renowned for its self-conceit; fancies itself, as the tall Kentuck did on the levee at New Orleans, 'a leetle cleverer' than all the rest of creation. But is it not the fact that Cockneydom could learn a lesson from some of our provincial towns? Ugly Birmingham even has a finer market-hall than any in London; and what is Covent Garden compared with the market at Birkenhead? There's some talk of building a new one, and I hope it is true, for it is pretty nearly time that the excellent fruits and vegetables offered for sale in Covent Garden should be displayed in a market more worthy of them. And in the matter of omnibuses: do not Glasgow, Liverpool, and some other places far outvie the metropolis?

Why should London be worse built than Edinburgh? I once lived six months in the northern metropolis, and had two rooms on a third flat in the New Town. It was

a good height; but so solid were the walls, and so firm the floors, that my sitting-room did not chatter when I walked across it; neither had I any apprehensions of tumbling through on the heads of the lodgers in the second flat. A widow with a large family occupied the room above mine; but, except on a Saturday, when she dragged her furniture about in a general cleaning, I never was disturbed by noises overhead, or alarmed for the safety of my ceiling. In my present London lodgings I hear every sound made by my neighbours, east, west, north, south, and underneath—happily there are none above me—and have frequently to lament that London builders have not yet profited by the example of those at Edinburgh.

So ends my say about How we Build in London: should it be read by any whom the cap fits, I only hope they'll try to be honest for the time to come, or let us know whether anybody's to blame.

THE GRAVE IN THE WEST.

WESTERN wind, balmy and sweet!
Stole you the breath of the blossoming limes,
Under whose boughs we were wont to meet—
Wont to meet in the olden times?

Far away—adown in the west
Blossom the limes that I love so well,
Under whose boughs my life was blest
With a love far dearer than words may tell.

Western wind, though so far away,
I trace in your sighing their odorous breath;
Surely you stole it, and brought it to say:
'Think of the boughs you have wandered beneath!'

The limes in that avenue, leafy and sweet,
Blossomed and faded one happy year,
While under their shadow our two hearts beat
With a love unclouded by doubt or fear.

The limes in that avenue, shady and old,
Have blossomed and faded many a year,
Since one true heart grew for ever cold,
And the other for ever withered and sore.

Western wind, let the lindens rest!
Waft me no breath from the lime-tree bowers—
But the perfume of roses that grow in the west
On a lowly grave that is covered with flowers!

THOMAS HOOD.

AFRICAN ABSOLUTISM.

The king of Dahomey is one of the most absolute tyrants in the world; and being regarded as a demigod by his own subjects, his actions are never questioned. No person ever approaches him, even his favourite chiefs, without prostrating themselves at full length on the ground, and covering their faces and heads with earth. It is a grave offence to suppose that the king eats, drinks, sleeps, or performs any of the ordinary functions of nature. His meals are always taken to a secret place, and any man that has the misfortune or the temerity to cast his eyes upon him in the act is put to death. If the king drinks in public, which is done on some extraordinary occasions, his person is concealed by having a curtain held up before him, during which time the people prostrate themselves, and afterwards shout and cheer at the very top of their voices.—*Wilson's Western Africa.*

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